

Message Text

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ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-02

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-15

COME-00 EB-07 LAB-04 SIL-01 INT-05 /082 W

----- 028364

R 150400Z MAY 75

FM AMCONSUL PORT MORESBY

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 517

INFO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

UNCLAS PORT MORESBY 0444

E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: EMIN, PP

SUBJ: BOUGAINVILLE COPPER RIOTS CEASE

1. LOCAL PRESS REPORTS RIOTERS CAPITULATED AFTER EARLY MORNING POLICE RAID ON LAST SUSPECTED POCKETS OF RESISTENCE. IN LAST BOUT OF VIOLENCE SOME THIRTY COMPANY PROVIDED EXPATRIATE WEEKEND BEACH FACILITIES AT LOLOHO WERE DAMAGED AND PERSONAL EFFECTS OF OWNERS LOOTED.

2. TOTAL NUMBER OF WORKERS IN DETENTION NOW ESTIMATED BY PRESS TO TOTAL 1000. OF THIS TOTAL TWO MAGISTRATES HAVE STARTED HEARING CHARGES OF RIOTOUS BEHAVIOR AGAINST ABOUT 700 MEN AND THE ROLE OF 300 APPRENTICE MEMBERS IS BEING INVESTIGATED. EIGHTEEN WHO HAVE PLEADED GUILTY HAVE BEEN SENTENCED TO SIX MONTHS IMPRISONMENT AT HARD LABOR. MAJORITY OF WORKERS HAVE PLEADED NOT GUILTY.

3. POLICE MINISTER PITA LUS ARRIVED ON BOUGAINVILLE MAY 14, TOURED MINE AND INSPECTED DAMAGE TO VEHICLES AND BUILDINGS.

4. PRESS INDICATES THAT IT MAY BE SEVERAL WEEKS BEFORE MINE RETURNS TO FULL PRODUCTION. MINE OFFICIAL HAS STATED THAT WORKERS FOUND NOT GUILTY WOULD NOT BE FIRED

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BUT THAT THEIR POSITIONS WOULD HAVE TO BE CONSIDERED

INDIVIDUALLY. MINES SPOKESMAN ALLEGED TO HAVE STATED
BREAKDOWN IN COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN THE BOUGAINVILLE
MINE WORKERS UNION EXECUTIVE AND ITS MEMBERS OVER THE
UNION-EMPLOYERS AGREEMENT WAS CAUSE OF RIOTS. STATED
DEMANDS FOR BETTER PAY AND CONDITIONS WERE CONTRARY TO
THE AGREEMENT AND HAD COME FROM BEHIND THE SCENES AGITATORS
WHO PERSUADED MEMBERS INTO DOING WHAT THEY THOUGHT WAS
A UNION EXECUTIVE DECISION. MINES OFFICIAL STATED THAT
MINES LOCALIZATION PROGRAM HAS SUFFERED SETBACK, AND
THAT WITH NEARLY 1000 PNG WORKERS AFFECTED, MINE IS FACED
WITH PROSPECT OF OVERSEAS RECRUITMENT.

5. NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT MINISTER GAVERA REA CHARACTERIZED
EVENTS AS "A TRAGIC HAPPENING". HE SAID THAT WHAT WAS
BASICALLY AN INDUSTRIAL PROBLEM HAD GROWN INTO A PROBLEM
OF MAINTAINING LAW AND ORDER. HE VOICED CONCERN THAT
CERTAIN UNION LEADERS WERE ENCOURAGING THEIR MEMBERS
TO IGNORE PREVIOUSLY REACHED AGREEMENTS ESTABLISHED BY
NATIONAL ARBITRATION TRIBUNALS, AND CALLED UPON BOTH
EMPLOYERS AND EMPLOYEES TO DEVELOP BETTER UNDERSTANDING.

6. COMMENT: CONGEN SUSPECTS NO MATURE ASSESSMENT THIS
SITUATION WILL BE AVAILABLE FOR NUMBER DAYS, UNTIL
TEMPERS HAVE COOLED AND DUST SETTLED. COMMENT WILL THEN
FOLLOW SEPTTEL.
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